

# Leatherneck Turns 85 —

**T**he "Magazine of the Marines" is 85. In the lifetime of magazines this is akin to the CH-46 helicopter carrying fully loaded infantrymen for another 15 years. It may be a problem for the Sea Knight, but no problem for *Leatherneck*.

Do you remember *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Look*, *Collier's*, *Argosy* and ... *George?*—all gone to that great newsstand in the sky.

*Leatherneck*, on the other hand, has not only continued to appear, but appears on more newsstands and in more bookstores than ever before. If you are not already getting it delivered to your door, it is now for sale at your favorite Marine Corps commissary, exchange, Barnes & Noble bookstore and other locations.

The "Magazine of the Marines" still manages to satisfy its nearly 100,000 faithful readers in an age when other publications of the military services struggle to be given away.

"Why is that?" we often ask ourselves, and to tell the truth we aren't really sure. We think we have a few good reasons and can rely on you the readers to, in no uncertain terms, let us know if we're full of used muzzle blast.

One of the reasons is that *Leatherneck* is really a one-of-a-kind magazine. It is a readers' digest of the Corps—a hybrid that is specifically targeted to that elite group of people who call themselves Marines, those who the Corps has taken into its Marine Corps family and those who want to know more about the Corps. Although the magazine has grown in the number of pages, photographs and amount of content and color used, it is essentially still focused on the same audience as when the first broadsheet ran off the press.

There is a clue to the magazine's success in the Tenth Edition of "Magazines for Libraries," which reads: "For more than 60 years *Leatherneck* was the only magazine geared toward enlisted Marines. ... *Leatherneck* has persevered by being far more entertaining than any of the official armed service magazines. A typical issue contains seven to ten feature articles on Marine Corps history, personalities, training, and so forth, and a regular section titled 'In Every Clime and Place,' describing current global deployments. Other features include a cartoon section called 'Leatherneck Laffs' and 'Gyrene Gyngles,' where subscribers

can submit their poetry—a real rarity for military magazines. [An] excellent choice for high school and public libraries."

Although *Leatherneck* is for more than enlisted Marines, those librarians nonetheless sound to us like some pretty smart people.

Another reason for *Leatherneck's* success is that the magazine keeps its readers in touch with the Corps as each reader remembers it. When a *Leatherneck* reader looks in the mirror, that Marine veteran does not see lines (i.e., receding hairlines



The mission of *Leatherneck* is to "inform, educate and entertain" Marine readers.

or expanding waistlines). He or she still sees that hard-charging, rompin', stompin' leatherneck who waded ashore at Okinawa, stood duty at Courthouse Bay, walked the Pusan Perimeter, stood watch in USS *Oklahoma City* (CL-91), manned a machine gun in a bunker near Da Nang or recruited in Buffalo. That's why you'll never see ads for old geezers in *Leatherneck*. There may be an old Corps, but never a Viagra or Geritol Corps, and our entire content reflects that.

*Leatherneck* is also a key part of the Marine family, whose loyalty to the Corps transcends the boundaries of other fra-

ternal organizations. "Once a Marine, always a Marine" is a mantra and basic precept in the brotherhood and sisterhood of the Corps that the magazine weaves into the fabric of every issue.

Now, as the magazine pushes toward the century mark, we would like to share with you a little of how we came to be here and where we hope to go.

In 1917 a few good Marines got together to put out a newspaper for themselves and their fellow Marines. *The Quantico Leatherneck* was first published on Nov. 17, 1918.

The mission of *Leatherneck*, then as now, was to "inform, educate and entertain" Marine readers. Then-Major General John A. Lejeune, 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, was an avid reader and supporter and saw *Leatherneck* as one of several means to raise the level of education and knowledge in the Corps.

In 1925 *Leatherneck's* format changed from that of a newspaper to a magazine. The rest is history.

*Leatherneck* caught on under the leadership and supervision of the Marine Corps Institute. At the time, the Corps was smaller than the New York City Police Department. The circulation for the magazine fluctuated, bouncing between 13,000 and 17,000, which was exceptional considering it was the era of the Great Depression.

The staff grew and so did the magazine's reputation. During World War II, circulation peaked at 225,000. While the Marine Corps may have its own cadre of public affairs talent, unlike its sister services, the Corps traditionally has not had a compelling interest in managing the news for its Marines. Corps officials also decided that *Leatherneck* should be more autonomous. So in 1943, enter the

*Leatherneck* Association under the purview of Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. The association was governed by HQMC-based officers.

*Leatherneck* and the *Leatherneck* Association were staffed primarily by active-duty Marines until 1972 when all billets for Marines at the magazine were eliminated. In 1976, the *Leatherneck* Association merged with the Marine Corps Association in a partnership that has proven beneficial to both organizations and the Marine Corps.

The *Leatherneck* staff, although not active-duty Marines, has kept close ties

# Where It's Been and Where It's Going

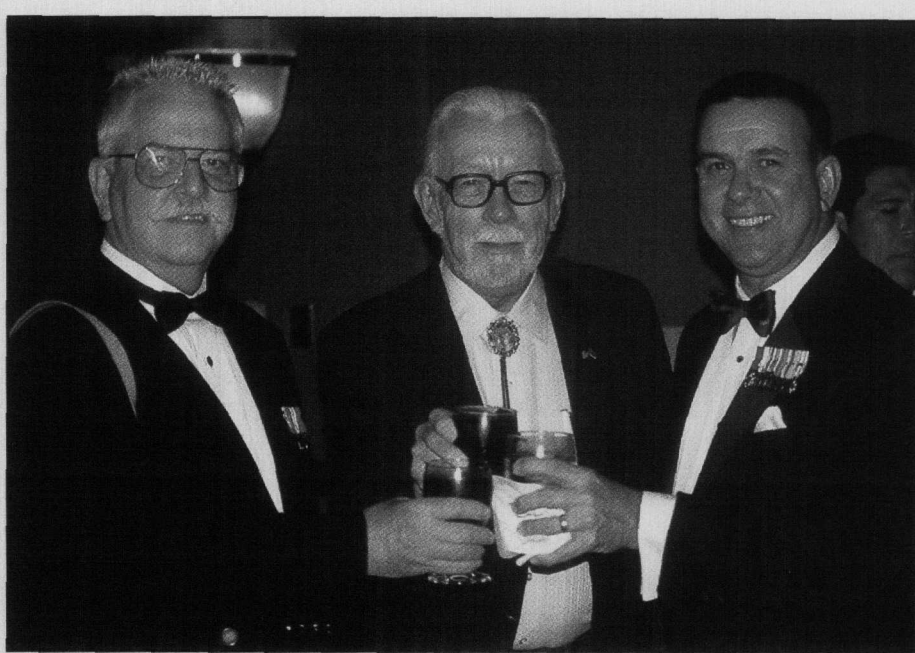
By R. R. Keene

with not only the Corps but also the Corps' combat correspondents, Marine Corps Public Affairs and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. This has allowed the magazine, while keeping its independence, to also speak informatively and with authority on issues as they arise.

Because the magazine is published monthly, *Leatherneck* makes no pretense about giving you hot news as it happens. We do, however, wait to see if a story "has legs," meaning it is going to continue to be of interest. If so, we work to gather in-depth material to give you a thorough account of what happened. We also continue to provide historical features as well as articles on new equipment and changes in tactics, trends and units. We still do special features and issues that update the posts of the Corps, aviation and the Reserve.

We are a "band of brothers" and sisters because as Marines we are fortunate to have a heritage immensely rich in history, resplendent with colorful characters, steeped in tradition and deep with valor. The history of the Corps has always been featured prominently in the magazine. It became more a major topic of stories in the last decade and early in this century when *Leatherneck* commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Gulf War, 35th anniversary of the Vietnam War, 50th anniversaries of WW II and the Korean War, and 100th anniversaries of the Spanish-American War and the Boxer Rebellion.

"Giants of the Corps" has been a feature of the magazine for years, highlighting the Corps' heroes, such as Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, Mitch Paige, "Manila



(Left to right) Master Sergeant Steve Stibbens, USMC (Ret), who served on the *Leatherneck* staff in the early 1960s, was one of the first combat correspondents into Vietnam, and later served in Vietnam as a correspondent with the Associated Press; Captain Chuck Tyler, USMC (Ret), who served on the staff from 1953 to 1964, with the exception of one year; and Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret), the current editor, toasted *Leatherneck's* 85th anniversary while at the annual Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association conference in Orlando, Fla., in September.

John" Basilone, Dan Daly, "Handsome" Jack Myers, John A. Lejeune and thousands of others whose stories of deeds and valor must be passed along from one generation of Marines to the next.

Your letters, comments and answers to our biennial surveys tell us that you not only enjoy the history but also are demanding more.

To give you a variety of such stories written in varied styles we've asked some

of our longtime friends and associates to use their unique talents as writers. Theirs is truly a service to their fellow Marines, because we don't pay them anything near what they deserve or would normally receive. They do it because they, too, are veteran Marines who know what war and soldiering are about—combat veterans who have usually served in the wars they write about and remember what it was like. They have the ability to tell you

*Leatherneck* staffers Chief Warrant Officer Frank H. Rentfrow and then-Lieutenant Donald L. Dickson created this successful pre-WW II comic strip.





LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

The late Col Don Dickson, USMC (Ret) served on the staff off and on beginning in 1933 and was editor and publisher from 1951 to 1970.

a story that will keep you enthralled from beginning to end.

*Leatherneck* bylines include, among numerous others, best-selling authors such as *Parade* magazine columnist and Korean War veteran James Brady; Colonel Jon Hoffman, USMCR, author of the bestseller "Chesty"; Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), noted author of several best-selling books on Marine Corps history; Marine Historian Emeritus Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret); Col Richard "Dick" Camp, USMC (Ret), author with Eric Hammel of "Lima-6: A Marine Company Commander in Vietnam"; Col John Grider Miller, USMC (Ret), author of "The Bridge at Dong Ha"; Hollywood screenwriter and former Marine Raider and combat correspondent William Douglas Lansford; and short-story writer Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret).

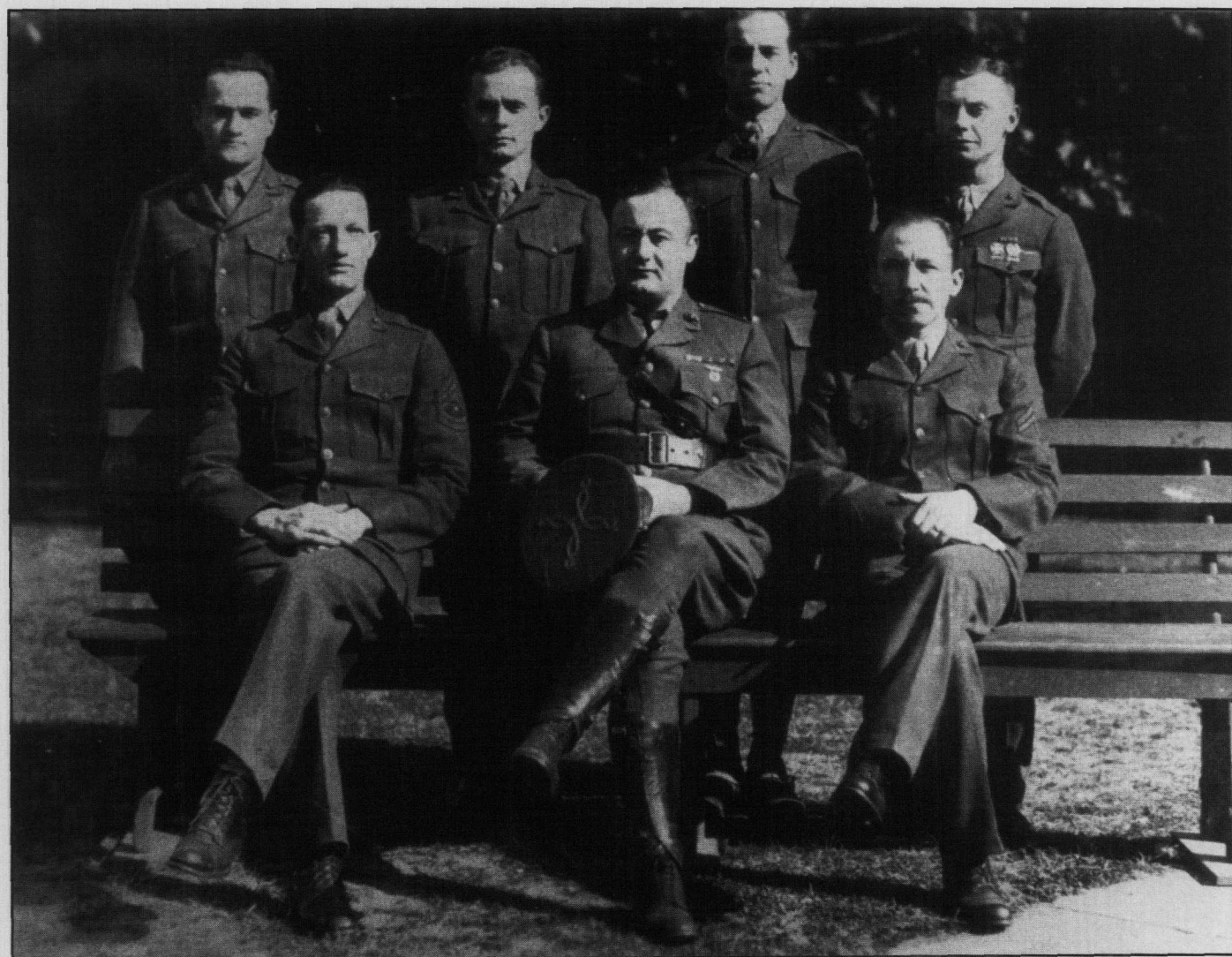
*Leatherneck* is a magazine that still uses the drawings and paintings of noted

artists who are also Marines: Col Charles Waterhouse, USMCR (Ret); Col H. Avery Chenoweth, USMCR (Ret); and Col Donna Neary, USMCR (Ret).

In September 2002, *Leatherneck* started displaying the works of the Corps' most recent combat artists. Just back from the war on terror and deployment in the Middle East and Central Asia, Staff Sergeant Michael D. Fay, USMCR is the first of what we hope are other combat artists who, like their predecessors of previous conflicts, will add their art to the pages of *Leatherneck*.

These are only a few of the many contributing artists and authors whose works grace the pages of *Leatherneck*, giving you tales of high adventure and a sense of duty, honor and commitment.

*Leatherneck* also has room for up-and-coming writers, photographers and artists and, particularly, active-duty Marines. In monthly columns such as "In Every Clime and Place" and "We—the Marines,"



COURTESY OF MS. PATRICIA SHER, DAUGHTER OF PVT HESSE

The staff of *The Leatherneck* at Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., posed in September 1928 upon the departure of First Lieutenant Carl Gardner as editor and publisher. (Seated, left to right) GySgt James M. Frost, associate editor; 1stLt Gardner; and Cpl Ralph E. Daniels, sports editor and advertising manager. (Standing, left to right) Private Anthony Pazzynski, staff assistant; Pvt Harry E. Hesse, assistant circulation manager; Cpl Chauncey W. Baker, circulation manager; and Pvt Frank H. Rentfrow, staff assistant

*Leatherneck* showcases the best works of our combat correspondents and combat camera Marines as they keep us up-to-date with what is happening in today's Marine Corps. Some of our better stories and photos have come from active-duty Marines.

Marine combat correspondent Sergeant Steven Davis' historical account of the fall of Saigon appeared in the May 2000 issue. He was later presented the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's Dan Daly Award for historical writing. Additionally, although not a Marine, J. Michael Miller, senior archivist at the Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico, Va., received the Heritage Foundation's Robert Debs Heinl Jr. award for best historical article after his series, "Marines in the Boxer Rebellion," appeared in *Leatherneck*. Marine combat photographer Corporal Timothy A. Pope's photo spread of Unitas Marines sailing beneath the Southern Cross also was honored with the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association Lou Lowery Award for photography. There are numerous other award-winning authors, illustrators and photographers who help to ensure *Leatherneck* remains the "Magazine of the Marines."

Along those same lines *Leatherneck* sponsors its own special awards to Marine correspondents and photographers. Three major annual awards are the Tom Bartlett Award, presented to the active-duty Marine who contributes to *Leatherneck*'s best magazine cover; the Lou Lowery Award for best photo, taken by a Marine sergeant or below; and the Ronald D. Lyons Award for best story, written by a Marine sergeant or below. In addition, the magazine staff actively supports the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association, the Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps Division of Public Affairs Merit Awards Program and the Thomas Jefferson Awards for professionalism in the various medias.

*Leatherneck* is also proud to be associated with the Marine Corps Association's awards program. The MCA annually sponsors more than \$100,000 in awards to Marines and the Marine Corps family worldwide. *Leatherneck* specifically is responsible for awards to the honor graduates of each platoon at the Marine Corps recruit depots and to each series high shooter.

The "Magazine of the Marines" is engaged in a never-ending effort to involve you, the readers. Audience participation is something that we want to see more of. We often negotiate with Marines and their families for stories only they can write. Additionally, we periodically ask

you to send us your favorite tales such as Marine Corps ghost stories and humorous tales of the Corps.

By far, the most audience participation comes from the letters addressed to "Sound Off." We receive so many that it is impossible to answer each and every one. But we encourage you to sound off on just about any topic of the Corps that concerns the general readership. Unlike other publications, *Leatherneck* has its own unique way of answering or letting the readers answer letters that appear. Seldom politically correct, the magazine and its readers voice their opinions and give and take in ways that other military publications do not.

We also are receiving kudos. A good number of you are saying the magazine has better content, and you've noticed that it looks better than ever. Our format is evolving as we move toward the future. New technologies enable us to make your magazine more appealing: better paper, more color, digital photographs and innovative layouts and designs.

We also have something new that we want those of you with personal computers to get into the habit of using. That is our greatly improved Web site: [www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck](http://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck).

The Web site is updated five days a week. Consequently, there's always news and current information for you to see, read and learn from. Where earlier we said that the magazine, by virtue of being a monthly, could not provide you with breaking and up-to-date Marine Corps news, our *Leatherneck* Web site can and does. What's more, the *Leatherneck* Web site, like the magazine, is evolving and growing.

Eventually it will be the Internet site you will go to for all your Marine Corps information and needs—everything from *Leatherneck* quotes to lingo, frequently asked questions, links and shopping via the Marine Corps Association bookstore and gift shop. We are the replacement for the gunnery sergeant you had when you joined who knew everything about the Corps.

We expect to win and keep your loyalty over the years. But it still is up to you to let us know what you want. Get on the phone, send us an e-mail, fax or drop us a line via snail mail. Let us know what you like and don't like, what you want and don't want. We're not the career planner, so we can't promise all your wishes will be granted. But we will listen, read and consider. Who knows? The timing may be magical and somebody out there will say, "Give that Marine orders to Bangkok!"



## To Order

**LEATHERNECK**  
MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

☐ I wish to become a member of the Marine Corps Association and receive *LEATHERNECK* magazine.

### MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Membership in the Marine Corps Association is open to all active-duty, Reserve, retired, and honorably discharged Marines or members of our sister services who are serving with or have served with Marine Corps units.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES\*



#### Enlisted

- ☐ 1 year \$19  
☐ 2 years \$34

#### Officers

- ☐ 1 year \$29  
☐ 2 years \$53

☐ I am not eligible for membership, but I wish to subscribe to *LEATHERNECK* magazine.

### NONMEMBER RATES\*

- ☐ 1 year \$29 ☐ 2 years \$53

\*Add \$16 per year for foreign postage to all above rates (other than APO/FPO addresses).

- ☐ Check/money order enclosed  
☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA  
☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Bank Charge Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Card Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Rank/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

Marine Corps Association

Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134

or call toll-free (866) 622-1775

Web site: [www.mca-marines.org](http://www.mca-marines.org)

e-mail: [subscribe@mca-marines.org](mailto:subscribe@mca-marines.org)

☐ Send me an MCA brochure with details concerning membership and services to members.

NAVL402